

This Week in Washington



WITH CONGRESSMAN
JO BONNER

Time to Prepare - Hurricane Season Begins

The 2008 hurricane season officially begins this week, Sunday, June 1, and lasts until November 30. With a busy season predicted, it is never too soon to start making preparations in the event a hurricane comes our way.

Experts at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center are projecting a 90 percent chance that the Atlantic Hurricane Season will be normal or above normal this year with 12 – 16 named storms and 2-5 major hurricanes.

Each of the First District's six counties is at risk of being impacted by a hurricane or tropical storm. It is critical that you and your family plan ahead and know the steps you should take before, during, and after any natural disaster. Remember, you can never be too prepared.

First responders might not be able to reach every single person within the first day following a disaster. You and your family need to be prepared to sustain yourselves for up to 72 hours after a hurricane.

You should have an emergency plan for where you can go if you are told to evacuate. I recommend choosing several places such as a friend's home in another town, a motel, or a shelter.

Let me also encourage you to prepare a disaster supply kit, containing items such as water (at least one gallon per person, per day), food (including non-perishable and canned items), a can opener, paper plates and utensils, blankets and pillows, clothing, first aid with medicines and prescription drugs, toiletries, flashlight with batteries, battery operated radio, fully charged cell phone with an extra battery, cash, keys, toys, important documents in a waterproof container or waterproof plastic bag, and insurance documents.

For more information on hurricane preparedness, you can visit NOAA's website,

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2>

Please remember that as we head into this hurricane season, my office and I stand ready to assist you. You can reach us toll free at 1-800-288-8721, and we'll be glad to do all we can to be helpful.

Water Safety

In addition to the start of hurricane season, June marks the beginning of summer.

With warmer weather and the end of the school year, many families will begin spending their days outside – usually at the beach or at a pool.

While many of our fondest summer memories have been forged on the white sandy beaches of Alabama's Gulf Coast, water-related tragedies do happen every year. In fact, this past Memorial Day weekend, three people drowned along Alabama's Gulf Coast.

It is important to keep some basic safety tips in mind to help prevent tragedies from happening. First and foremost, you should never swim alone.

To stay safe in the water, it is also important to learn to swim. The American Red Cross Gulf Coast chapter offers swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To find out more information about these swim courses, you can call 251-436-7940.

Parents should know where their children are at all times. Children should never be left unattended around water, and pools should be enclosed with a self-locking, self-closing fence.

In the event an accident does occur, you and your family should be trained in CPR. You should have life-saving equipment near your pool, and you should know how to use it.

Be knowledgeable of your water environment. Before swimming, you should check your local weather conditions and forecasts.

Never swim in bad weather.

Sadly, there are some water-related tragedies that can't be prevented, but hopefully, following these safety suggestions will help you and your family have a fun and safe summer in the water.

Class of 2008

Before heading to beach, many young men and women throughout the First District and across the country are experiencing an annual rite of passage. Proud parents and families are gathering at graduation ceremonies in honor of the Class of 2008.

With pride and anticipation, parents – who have spent years helping with homework, attending athletic events, and supporting extracurricular activities – are seeing the culmination of years of hard work and sacrifice.

Later this week, I will have the honor of speaking to the graduating seniors at the Alabama School of Math and Science. And last month, I had the privilege of speaking to the first graduating class at Spanish Fort High School as well as to the Class of 2008 at Clarke Prep School in Grove Hill.

To all the graduates of the Class of 2008 – congratulations on your achievement, and remember your education never ends.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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For release the week of Monday, June 02, 2008. For more information please contact Mike Lewis at (202)225-4931.